



THE NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

# Reviewing Stand

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## Illinois U Library Universal Conscription

A radio discussion over WGN and the Mutual Broadcasting System  
in conjunction with the Committee on Debate Materials and Inter-  
state Cooperation of the National University Extension Association

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Broadcast continuously since 1934 by Northwestern University



**THE REVIEWING STAND** is a weekly radio forum presented by Northwestern University. The program was first broadcast by Station WGN, Chicago, October 14, 1934. It has been on the air continuously since that time, originating in the WGN studios, and, since 1935, carried by stations of the Mutual Broadcasting System. **THE REVIEWING STAND** presents members of the Northwestern University faculty and distinguished guests from business, government, education, and the press in round table discussions of contemporary problems—the questions that are in the news. The program is under the direction of James H. McBurney, Dean of the School of Speech, Northwestern University, and Miss Myrtle Stahl, Director of Educational Programs, WGN, Chicago.

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# Universal Conscription

**MR. MCBURNEY:** We present today's discussion in cooperation with the Committee on Debate Materials and Interstate Cooperation of the National University Extension Association. We discuss the question being debated by high school debaters all over the nation, "Should all American citizens be subject to conscription for essential service in time of war?"

We will hear first from Mr. Lawrence J. Fenlon, Past Illinois State Commander of The American Legion, and Chairman of the National Economic Commission of The American Legion.

Mr. Fenlon, where do you stand on this question?

**MR. FENLON:** Mr. McBurney, members of the panel, and members of the radio audience: It is my viewpoint in this discussion, and that of The American Legion, that "It may be laid down as a primary position that every citizen who enjoys the protection of a free government owes not only a proportion of his property but his personal services to its defense."

We do not claim to be the originator of that thought, however, as its original author was the Father of our Country, George Washington.

## Total War

In these days of total war, war means just what that name implies—a war of all, as a unit, for the preservation of our ideals, our freedoms, yes, our very existence.

The framers of our Constitution intended that Congress should have the power, if necessary, to call on every citizen to come to its aid in waging a successful war.

To those who may hold that conscription of our citizens for essential service in time of war is "slave labor or involuntary servitude," in violation of our Constitution, permit me to

quote Mr. Chief Justice White of the Supreme Court, in rejecting a similar contention raised as to the 1917 Selective Draft Law: "Finally, as we are unable to conceive upon what theory the exaction by government from the citizen of the performance of his supreme and noble duty of contributing to the defense of the rights and honor of the nation, as the result of a war declared by the great representative body of the people, can be said to be the imposition of involuntary servitude in violation of the prohibitions of the Thirteenth Amendment, we are constrained to the conclusion that the contention to that effect is reflected by its mere statement."

The American Legion's position for nearly thirty years has been—in war—"Equal service for all, special profits and privileges for none."

To achieve that end, I advocate in time of war—in distributing manpower to essential services—a system of national service by registration and assignment when volunteers are inadequate, to be administered with adequate safeguards, similar to the system followed by England, Canada, Australia and New Zealand in World War II.

Thus only can there be a balanced equity in the total burden of sacrifice in time of war.

## Negative View

**MR. MCBURNEY:** Now we have heard from Mr. Fenlon of The American Legion.

Our second speaker is James B. Carey, Secretary-Treasurer of the C.I.O. and President of the International Union of Electrical Workers in the C.I.O.

Mr. Carey, where do you stand?

**MR. CAREY:** Every right-thinking American who understands the nature of industrial relations, who has studied the record of free American labor during World War II, and who gives more

than lip service to the principles of American democracy must stand squarely against any effort to enact a labor draft at any time, because:

(1) Labor conscription is involuntary servitude, and it is hateful and morally obnoxious to all those who cherish freedom. There is no moral similarity between conscripting a soldier to serve his government and conscripting a worker for the private profit of others. The soldier serves the honor of his nation and is the protector of its freedom; the conscripted worker is subjected to involuntary servitude to private stockholders.

(2) Only free labor is productive labor. That was certainly proven in World War II when American workers, in cooperation with government and business, showed that a free and democratic America can outproduce a slave labor system such as that used by Hitler and Tojo. If need be, we will show again—on the production lines of America—that free labor is superior to the slave labor battalions of Joe Stalin.

(3) Conscription, even if it could be legally imposed by Congress, would reduce production, and not increase it. It is an impractical idea; it will not work in a democracy. No central authority anywhere can plan and direct this giant enterprise. Only labor, management and government, working together nationally and locally, in hundreds of thousands of different communities, in the spirit of patriotism and self-restraint, can meet and conquer the problems of production. Freedom-loving Americans will not produce effectively if the gun of a slave labor boss is planted squarely in their backs.

### 'Work Against Bottleneck'

(4) We have to get at the unfair working conditions, the discrimination against older workers, against women, against Negroes and other minority groups, poor housing and community facilities, the bungling on the part of procurement agencies. Yes, and we have to get at these real shortages, shortages of materials such as copper, steel and aluminum; those things are the bottlenecks today.

Those are the things to which we ought to direct our attention and to solve. We can depend on the American people to utilize their opportunities to make their maximum contribution.

We are against any form of national service legislation to cause free people to change their habits, to work for private employers on a basis of legislative enactment.

MR. MCBURNEY: That is the view of James B. Carey, of the C.I.O.

We hear next from Roland Young, Professor of Political Science at Northwestern University. Where do you stand, Young?

### 'Work or Fight'

MR. YOUNG: McBurney, it is my position that the United States Government should be prepared to conscript all citizens for essential service in time of war. Surely, none can deny the equal obligation of everyone to serve where best he can, and this is the principle of that rather homely expression, "Work or Fight."

But I am not advocating national service legislation merely to achieve a fanciful equality of obligation. I am advocating it because I feel sure that, in a total war, such measures will be necessary in order to achieve maximum production. We cannot rely on the wage scale alone as a device for attracting labor to the right job. The government, on occasion, will need to be able to bring men into certain essential lines of work, to prevent job-jumping and job-quitting, to prevent manpower hoarding, to use effectively those exempted from military service, and to balance total manpower demands.

The policy we followed in the last war was to apply duress to some groups, but not to others. It was applied to the soldiers, and some soldiers were even forced to perform civilian tasks because civilian manpower was not otherwise available. It was applied to the farm worker, who was under special legislation, and to the deferred worker. It was not, however, applied to the worker who became draft-exempt.



Because of the difficulties in meeting manpower needs under a part-duress, part-voluntary system, both houses of Congress passed national service legislation in 1945. The end of the war was by then in sight, and in April of that year the Senate defeated the conference report.

### 'Well-Balanced Manpower Policy'

In any foreseeable war we shall not have the labor slack we had in 1941, and it will be necessary to adopt, in the early stages, a stringent, well-balanced manpower policy.

MR. MCBURNEY: Now you have heard from Professor Young, of the Political Science Department of Northwestern University.

Our fourth speaker is Frederick H. Harbison, executive officer of the Industrial Relations Center at the University of Chicago. Where do you stand, Harbison?

MR. HARBISON: McBurney, I am opposed to conscription of American citizens for essential civilian service in time of war, for these reasons:

First, as Carey has pointed out, conscription substitutes the idea of compulsion for free will in participation in the war effort. In our type of society, such a drastic change would, I submit, undermine the incentives of free workers to produce more, and would at the same time destroy the incentives for employers to utilize manpower effectively. The net result would be lower levels of production.

Secondly, in time of war, manpower can be effectively allocated for essential service by a combination of voluntary and compulsory controls which do not involve a "work or fight" law. Such measures would include the location of defense work with relation to manpower availability, adequate housing, community facilities, and so forth. It would require the institution of voluntary employment stabilization plans in strategic defense areas as we had during World War II. It would also call for the compulsory curtailment of non-essential activities, and finally, it would probably call for the rationing of job opportunities by government-

imposed ceilings on employment in various business establishments.

In other words, if you limit employment opportunities in nonessential activities, you make it necessary for the citizen to seek work in essential activities, but you do so without compelling him to take a particular job.

Also, when you tell a company that it can employ only a limited number of workers—in other words, impose an employment ceiling—you put pressure on management to utilize manpower most effectively, but you still leave the employer and the employee a great deal of freedom. You still count on their voluntary cooperation in the war effort. You provide the worker a strong incentive to engage in essential work, and you increase management's incentive to operate efficiently.

Third, conscription would not—as its advocates say—result in equality of sacrifice in an atomic war, for these reasons:

### Equality of Sacrifice?

First, with the mass bombing and general destruction of American cities, I submit that civilians would be as much exposed to dangers as those men who are in uniform.

Secondly, as far as pay checks are concerned, we can achieve equity only through the stabilization of wages, salaries and prices applicable to all, and through equitable distribution of the tax load. Conscription, I submit, contributes nothing to the solution of the problems of equity.

Third, I think it is obvious that conscription would involve tremendous organizational and administrative difficulties. It would require a large bureaucracy to put the plan into operation. I think that conscription would be practically unworkable, even if it were desirable, which it is not.

Finally, the whole idea of conscription for civilian activities is repugnant to employers, unions, workers and all citizens in our free society. When free men are faced with a war of survival, they will freely and voluntarily participate in activities essential to the preservation of their freedom. A free government must plan the coordinated

effort. It must inform people how they can make their contribution, but it defeats its own ends if it usurps the responsibility of the individual freely to volunteer his services.

## Heritage of Freedom

American citizens have been reared as free men. They will not throw overboard their heritage of freedom in a fight to preserve their freedom.

MR. McBURNEY: Young wishes to speak to your points, Harbison.

MR. YOUNG: There is a good deal to what you say, Harbison, and with some of it I agree, but I think perhaps both you and Carey have not emphasized sufficiently the role that the government will have to play in any future war. I think we will find in any future war that we will not have the labor slack we had in World War II, and we will also find that we cannot follow the rather lackadaisical policies we followed so long in the last war.

Specifically, it seems to me that the government will have to control employment to a much greater degree than it did in the last war. This will mean balancing manpower needs; it will mean directing employment in certain areas; it will mean keeping people working, and it will mean being able to do this, not by a "work or fight" method which applies to a few people, but by a well balanced plan which will apply to all manpower.

MR. CAREY: Mr. Young, I have been in the Soviet Union three times in the last few years, and I saw there a government that told the workers that they had to work or fight, that tried to direct every activity, including the kind of housing they have, and I would say to you quite frankly that I'll take the work habits of the American people, believing them to be superior to any work habits throughout the world, and certainly superior to the kind of system that operates when you have this "work or fight" notion that you are trying to project.

I am suggesting here that American labor won the last war in conjunction

with the people in the armed services and management, through cooperation with their government.

Now, why do we jeopardize that tremendous goal of production? We outproduce the world! Now you suggest a different system. Will we get more production? The answer is no!

## 'A Civilian War'

MR. FENLON: May I point out that it seems to me we are losing sight of the type of war we are going to have to face, if there is to be a World War III. I think we must all recognize that the next war is going to be a total war, or an all-out war, or an atomic war, however you care to describe it, and as Mr. Harbison pointed out, the civilians will probably suffer more than the man in the front lines, because the front lines are going to be right here in our own country.

We fought two world wars, and we had friends to help us stave off the enemy while we prepared back home, both from a productive viewpoint and also in organizing our military forces. That won't happen again. We are the top, Number 1 agency that is going to be struck by the aggressor this time.

Our Air Force has already stated that 50 per cent or more of these long-range bombers will be able to break through our curtain of resistance and strike at our productive centers.

Certainly, we need a planned utilization of our manpower, a planned utilization of our productive factories and everything else, well in advance, but we also must see to it that all of the manpower of the country is available in time of war when it hits us, and it will hit us quick.

MR. HARBISON: Fenlon, I can agree with practically everything you said. I can agree that the war is going to be an all-out war, and I agree, also, with Young, that we have to do a good job of manpower planning. I'll go so far as to say that we have to do a good job of allocation of manpower.

Now, I submit that we do that on the basis of allocation of job oppor-



tunities rather than the allocation of individuals to individual jobs.

**MR. McBURNEY:** There are certain obvious areas of agreement here. It is agreed that if we face another war, it is going to be an all-out affair, that it is likely to hit us pretty close to home, and we are agreed, apparently, too, that we should do as much planning as possible in advance, both in terms of manpower and in terms of materials as well.

**MR. CAREY:** And we are also agreed that the best job is not being done now in terms of the utilization of manpower.

**MR. HARBISON:** I think Carey has a point there that our manpower difficulties, at least the manpower difficulties that we faced during World War II, were largely the consequence of inadequate planning, poor location of defense work, insufficient curtailment of nonessential activities, and so forth and so on.

### Advance Planning

Now, if we ever get to a stage in this country where conscription is necessary, then I submit it will be necessary because we will not have done the type of planning job that needs to be done. We need to be doing a better job of planning the location of our defense contracts, and also of developing within workers and management even greater incentives to produce more effectively. That is the only way that we are going to win the next war.

**MR. YOUNG:** Harbison, I agree with you completely, but is not the point this: Even if we do plan adequately, we'll have to have some controls over civilian labor? In other words, we cannot have civilian labor which is entirely free, as our friend Carey seems to think it will be, as it surely was not in the last war. There is some relation, then, between controlling employment and adequate planning.

Point 2: It seems to me, also, that in the last war we did use this principle of duress, this principle of "work

or fight," of deferring a worker if he were working in an essential job; that was, in essence, applying the principle of duress. It was applied to many industrial workers. It was applied to many farm workers. But it wasn't applied universally, and there were many types of people who did not come under this duress, and it was largely those people who created some of the manpower difficulties.

**MR. HARBISON:** You can control employment, Young, without having a "work or fight" law.

### Military Conscription

**MR. YOUNG:** You had Selective Service, however.

**MR. HARBISON:** That's a different matter. I think all of us here are in agreement that there must be conscription for military service. We're talking about civilian service.

**MR. FENLON:** I don't see a particle of difference between conscription for military service and conscription for essential services to this country in time of war. Certainly, the basic principle of our Constitution is predicated upon the fact that all of us owe an obligation to our nation in time of war, and there isn't a bit of difference in the service.

**MR. CAREY:** But do you owe an obligation to a private employer who is seeking to make a profit? And would you, Mr. Fenlon, require that kind of legislation to make your contribution to this nation? You quoted Supreme Court Justice White—he said the supreme and noble duty of a citizen is to his government. No one questions that, but we do say there is a vast difference between making your supreme and noble duty to your government and the freedom of all the people, and being required by an act of Congress to work for a particular employer under the terms and conditions that he imposes, for private profit.

**MR. FENLON:** I said nothing like that. I said "for essential services." That is the topic of discussion here. You are working for the government

in the productive activities of the war.

**MR. CAREY:** No. Now, there is where we have a difference, Mr. Fenlon. If you're working for the government, then it's all right, but if you're working for a private employer, you see, that makes it a different kind of situation.

**MR. FENLON:** The private employer is actually an agency of the government during that period.

**MR. CAREY:** The private employer is not conscripted, is he?

**MR. YOUNG:** Let me add a point to that. In the first place, during the last war we did have, to some extent, an individual who was forced to work for a private employer, and, in particular, we had soldiers who were drafted and who were sent to work for private employers. Then, too, we had a type of duress which was almost the same thing—that is, you prevented a man from leaving work or you would take him into the Army. Now, he could work or go into the Army, and he did have that choice, to be sure, but you attempted to limit his employment choices, so he did have to work in essential jobs. It seems to me that is what we are attempting to get here—the limiting of the freedom of choice of the worker, so that he does have to work in essential services, because there is no other place to work.

### Fight of Free Labor

**MR. CAREY:** Young, we would hope that this country would not be dependent upon the kind of production that came from that group of people.

Now, the question here is, "Should we put all the people of the United States in that same position?" We say "No." We think we must eliminate the real problems. Some of our workers are not free today. A Negro is not free to work at his capacity; women workers are discriminated against.

Why don't we use our present opportunity? The war is now on. We shouldn't kid ourselves about this. That's not a pink tea that is going

on in Korea, or in India, or these other parts of the world. This fight that is going on with the Communists here at home is not the kind of peaceful situation that you make it appear. The fight is on between free labor and totalitarian-controlled labor.

**MR. HARBISON:** You see, in this country we believe in the principle of free enterprise, of free unions, of free collective bargaining, of all kinds of individual freedoms. During a period of war, if we are going to wage a war successfully, we must maintain these freedoms in so far as possible, because it is these freedoms that provide the incentives to do the things that must be done.

### Nonessential Activities

Now, Young, I think that you are really arguing my position by saying that we should limit employment opportunities. I am in favor of having only one service station operating on every corner during the war; I am in favor of closing down stores and theaters and bars and hotels and all nonessential activities; and if you close down these nonessential activities, then workers are going to find employment in the essential activities.

During World War II it was never necessary to do that. We fought a war and almost expanded our civilian economy, too.

It seems to me this talk of conscription implies a lack of faith of American people freely to recognize problems which face them.

We won the last war. We made a few sacrifices on the civilian front because sacrifices were not necessary to win that type of a war. When our cities are bombed and thousands of people are killed all at once, don't you have sufficient faith in the American people to believe that they will do their jobs, provided that someone tells them where they can be most effectively utilized, without having to be legally compelled to do so?

**MR. YOUNG:** Harbison, I'll answer that in a second, but it doesn't seem to me we can answer this problem by shibboleths.



To go back to Carey's point, there is no doubt that a manpower supply should be available, but that is not the question. Nor is the question that free labor can produce. We want to know whether, say, a million or so 4-F's will again be allowed to be uncontrolled and fail to produce their share, as I think some of them did in the last war.

MR. HARBISON: They produced their share in the last war, just as much as anybody else produced his share.

### 'All the People'

MR. CAREY: You can call it what you may, but the question we are discussing here is "Should all American citizens be subject to conscription for essential service in time of war?" I still insist we are not doing anything through the method you suggest in getting more people involved in the work force. We'd like to have all the people make their contribution.

MR. McBURNEY: I think, Carey, that Young and Fenlon would agree with what you just said—that is, they would urge any and all resources for planning. As I understand it, though, they insist that—assuming all these plans had been made—there may come a time when we will need to go beyond the use of volunteers and impose conscription.

Do I state your position correctly?

MR. YOUNG: Yes. In particular, I would say you would have to prevent some people from quitting some

types of work some time; also, it may be necessary to direct some people to certain kinds of work, some time, in addition to the voluntary methods.

MR. McBURNEY: But Harbison says that if you do these things: if you impose employment ceilings on non-essential industries, control materials, impose price and wage controls, then you won't need this conscription.

MR. FENLON: That is only partly true. I don't agree with Harbison that you will always get sufficient productivity from volunteers. In case of a total war, you are going to require every resource of this country to prosecute a victorious war.

I don't agree with him, either, that when you conscript somebody (if he is a real American) it means you are going to "conscript" his viewpoint on the winning of the war.

Certainly, we have won wars—two wars for the world—by reason of a policy of conscription of our manpower for the armed services, and nobody can deny that.

MR. HARBISON: Conscription ought to be the very last thing we adopt, and it will never be necessary. If we adopt conscription too early, we destroy the incentives to attack the fundamentals of the problem. That is why I am unalterably opposed to it.

MR. CAREY: We can defeat Stalin...

ANNOUNCER: I'm sorry, gentlemen, but our time is up.



# Suggested Reading



Compiled by William Huff,  
and M. Helen Perkins, Reference Department,  
Deering Library, Northwestern University.



ALY, BOWER, ed. *War Service: Twenty-fifth Debate Handbook*. The N.U.E.A. Debate Handbook, 1951-52.

Contains pro and con discussions on the subject "War Service" and a lengthy bibliography.

DEVAN, S. A. *Universal Military Training and the Problem of Military Manpower*. U.S. Library of Congress. Legislative Reference Service. Public Affairs Bulletin No. 90. February, 1951.

A bulletin giving statistical and verbal facts concerning the problem of military manpower faced by the U.S.

FITZPATRICK, EDWARD A. *Universal Military Training*. McGraw-Hill, New York, 1945.

The author favors having compulsory universal military training replace the Selective Service System in order to build a reserve of trained manpower.

JOHNSEN, JULIA E. (comp.) *Compulsory Military Training*. (The Reference Shelf, Vol. 14, No. 6) H. W. Wilson, New York, 1941.

General discussion of conscription, followed by affirmative and negative positions. Bibliography.

MARX, HERBERT L., Jr. *Universal Conscription for Essential Service*. (The Reference Shelf, Vol. 23, No. 3) H. W. Wilson, New York, 1951.

A compilation of material from many sources on the entire question of conscription, manpower needs, armed service needs, UMT, and total conscription, including women; contains extensive bibliography.

National Council Against Conscription. *Militarism in Education*. The Council, Washington, D.C., 1950.

The National Military Establishment has infiltrated into our educational system, and is seeking to indoctrinate the finer minds in our country.

United States Congress. *Universal Military Training*. House of Representatives. Hearings on H.R. 1752, 82nd Congress, 1st Session. U.S. Gov't, Washington, D.C., 1951.

Verbatim hearings in the U.S. House of Representatives on H.R. 1752.

*University Debaters' Annual 1947-1948*. p. 183-218. H. W. Wilson, New York, 1948.

The text of a debate on UMT between students of Notre Dame and Purdue with incidental reference to total conscription; includes a bibliography.



*Academy of Political Science Proceedings* 24:371-82. "Civilian Aspects of Military Manpower Policy." M. G. MURRAY.

A discussion of "civilian aspects of military manpower policy in terms of a long period of armed preparedness, geared to the possibility of expansion for all-out conflict."

*American Economic Review* 40: Papers and Proceedings, 222-29, May, 1950. "Labor Problems of a Defense Economy." L. G. REYNOLDS.

A paper centering around the question of the extent to which labor problems rising during a war may be "anticipated and prepared for in a peacetime economy."

*American Economic Review* 40:323-48. Je., '50. "Problem of Controlling Resource Flows in Wartime." E. B. GEORGE and R. J. LANDRY.

This review of the work *Wartime Production Controls*, offers criticisms and commentaries on the planning of such controls in any future conflict.

*Annals of The American Academy of Political and Social Science* 241:15-25. Sep., '45. "Procurement of Manpower in American Wars." L. B. HERSHEY.

A historical survey of America's problem of procuring manpower for her wars.

*Atlantic* 187:25-9, Apr. '51. "Survival Is Not Enough." A. W. GRISWOLD.

Universal conscription must not be permitted to destroy college education which is not just a luxury but is essential to the nation's well being.

*Congressional Digest* 30:193-224, Aug.-Sep., '51. "Resolved: That All Americans Be Subject to Conscription in Time of War."

A consideration and pro and con discussion of the nationwide debate topic for the 1951-1952 school year.

*Fortune* 43:78-9, Mar., '51. "Manpower Controls Next?"

Circumstances have changed to such a degree since World War II that such controls may be operating before the middle of 1952.

*Independent Woman* 30:101-2, Apr. 5, '51. "Womanpower and the Draft." G. F. McQUATTERS.

Total mobilization will bring about the drafting of women, but the women will probably be the ones to decide just where they fit into the defense picture.

*Nation's Schools* 47:34-6, Feb., '51. U.M.T. Means Total Permanent Control of All Our Young Men by a Federal Agency." R. B. KENNAN

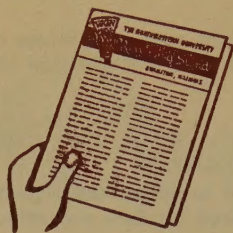
Universal military training "means total, permanent control of all our young men by a federal agency."

*Saturday Evening Post* 223:29, Sep. 16, '50. "What Will We Be Short of This Time?" P. F. DRUCKER

Manpower may be the one thing we will be shortest of in the event of another conflict.

*Town Meeting* Vol. 13, Jl. 17, '47. "Is Universal Military Training Necessary for Our Security?" G. V. DENNY, Jr.

The text of a radio symposium on the question of UMT.



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7. Do We Still Face a Housing Shortage?
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